



# F-35 Lightning II Program

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**GOVERNOR BREWER, UNDERSECRETARY FANNING HEADLINE F-35 JSF UNVEILING AT LUKE AFB**

**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.** -- Luke Air Force Base celebrated the arrival of its first F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter jet with an unveiling ceremony on March 14. The event was attended by approximately 500 people, including elected officials, community leaders, representatives from partner nation air forces and many Luke Airmen.

"Today's ceremony embodies, to me, commitment," Undersecretary of the Air Force Eric Fanning said. "For the Air Force it represents our commitment to the F-35. This weapons system is critical for the Air Force continuing to provide decisive air superiority around the world. This fighter will dominate anything else, anywhere in the world that any other country produces."

Joining the undersecretary on stage was Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, Congressman Trent Franks, Gen. Robin Rand, Air Education and Training command commander, Brig. Gen. Michael Rothstein, 56th Fighter Wing commander, and Lorraine Martin, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics F-35 program vice president and general manager.

"I'm really honored to be here on such an historic day for Luke Air Force Base," Brewer told the packed hangar, while behind the stage the steely gray jet was on display, shimmering under display lights.

"I am thrilled for all the military, for the residents of the West Valley and for our state," the governor said. "As a charter member of Fighter Country Partnership, I am immensely proud to stand with you to welcome this incredible aircraft to the Valley of the Sun."

The jet, which arrived at Luke on March 10, is the first of what will eventually be 144 F-35s assigned to Luke, for a total of six squadrons. The first aircraft, with tail number AF-41, is assigned to the 61st Fighter Squadron, which most recently reactivated in October 2013 and traces its lineage back to World War II.

Luke AFB was also named as the F-35 pilot training center for seven partner nations. The first partner nation to train at Luke is expected to be Australia, which should have two jets at the base by the end of 2014.

"The F-35 is virtually undetectable to its enemies and will provide the Air Force a decisive edge in battle," Martin said of the jet's capabilities. "It is an agile, versatile, high-performance, nine G-force, multirole fighter that provides unmatched capability and unprecedented situational awareness."

Rand emphasized the strategic importance of the F-35 for the Air Force.

"The F-35 Lightning II will deliver warfighting capabilities essential to the security of our nation for decades, and we will maintain our Air Force's ability to employ lethal force against 21st century threats," he said. "Folks, here's the truth: this airplane is a war bird, and that's how it will be used," he said. "Let's not forget what our Airmen are here to do - they're here to keep our children and our grandchildren safe. And the F-35 is going to be the platform, the neatest, best machine available to do that."



Arizona Governor Jan Brewer addresses an audience of approximately 500 community leaders, elected officials, representatives from partner nation air forces and Luke Airmen during an unveiling ceremony on March 14 at Luke Air Force Base for the 56th Fighter Wing's first F-35 Lightning II fighter jet. Brewer was joined on stage by Undersecretary of the Air Force Eric Fanning (left) and Gen. Robin Rand, commander of Air Education and Training Command (right). "I am thrilled for all the military, for the residents of the West Valley and for our state," the governor said. "I'm immensely proud to stand with you to welcome this incredible aircraft to the Valley of the Sun." (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Devante Williams)